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School Committee Minutes 03/23/2010

Approved by the Arlington School Committee May 11, 2010

**THE ARLINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, MARCH 23, 2010
7:30 P.M.**

Present: Joe Curran, Chair Denise Burns, Vice Chair
Joe Curro, Secretary Leba Heigham
Ronald Spangler Cindy Starks
Jeff Thielman

*Kathleen Bodie, Interim Superintendent
Diane Johnson, Chief Financial Officer:
Wallis Raemer, Interim Assistant Superintendent
Mark Ryder, Special Education Director
Erin McDonald, and Rachel Belofsky Student Reps
Karen Fitzgerald, Administrative Assistant*

*Dr. Spangler exited the meeting at 8:14 and returned at 8:22 p.m.
Ms. Burns exited the meeting at 8:30 and returned at 8:48 p.m.
Ms. Starks exited the meeting at 8:55 p.m. and returned at 8:59 p.m.
Dr. Bodie exited the meeting around 10:10 p.m.
Mr. Curran exited the meeting at 10:39 p.m. and returned at 10:40 p.m.
Ms. Burns exited the meeting at 10:40 p.m.
Mr. Ryder exited the meeting at 10:40 pm.
The student reps exited the meeting at 10:40 p.m.*

*Mr. Curran opened the meeting at 7:35 pm.
Mr. Curran reviewed the artwork displayed in the School Committee room.*

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

- *Ms. Sarah Fiorie, Peirce parent spoke on her concern of the enrollment numbers and combining grades.*
- *Ms. Cindy Bouvier, Director of Health and Wellness spoke on her concern for the future leadership and urged the committee to continue the current administration in Arlington.*
- *Ms. Nancy Shafman asked the committee to consider changing the school calendar to start prior to September and spoke of adding additional holidays.*
- *Ms. Sheri Donovan, Thompson School Principal said she had attended the Superintendent Search Process Subcommittee today and is in favor of their recommendation for Superintendent.*
- *Mr. Tim Ruggere Ottoson Middle School Principal suggested we keep the leadership we currently have and to continue in the direction they are going.*
- *Mr. Jack Flood, Ottoson Middle School recommended keeping the current administration.*
- *Ms. Sandy Sturgios thanked the School Committee and Dr. Kathleen Bodie and recommended keeping Dr. Bodie as Superintendent and having stability in Arlington.*

APPROVAL OF COSTA RICA, FEB 2011

Ms. Meghan Basset, Spanish Teacher at Arlington High School had requested approval of an educational tour to Costa Rica during February 2011 school vacation.

Ms. Burns moved to approve the Costa Rica, Trip February 2011, seconded by Mr. Thielman.

Voted: 7-0

FIVE-YEAR HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF SCHOOL EXPENDITURES PRESENTATION

Dr. Bodie stated that she would like the School Committee to vote the budget on Thursday, March 25, 2010 which is an additional School Committee meeting to continue discussions on the budget.

Ms. Diane Johnson, Chief Financial Officer, presented a power point presentation on the Five-Year Historical Analysis of School Expenditures and included the following documents in the School Committees packets: Summary of Expenses Growth by Funding Source, Expenditures from Town, School, Grants and Fees, Expenditures from School budget Only, Expenditures from Town Budget Only, Expenditures from Grants, Fees and Other Revenues, excluding Town and School Budgets and Schedule 4 Special Education Expenditures.

After the committee members raised concerns with the Athletic Fee section of the report, as well as Transportation and Testing and Assessment costs Ms. Heigham requested to Ms. Johnson to research these expenditures from FY 08 and report back at the next meeting.

BUDGET UPDATE

Dr. Kathleen Bodie, Interim Superintendent reported on the Proposed Budget Summary for FY 11:

- Revenues included:
 - The Total Town Contribution as of March 21, 2010 was 38,449.451
 - ARRA IDEA Grant Funds are \$359,964
 - Total Grant Revenues \$2,188,716
 - Total Fees/ Offsets with no increase \$2,712,605
 - Total Revenue \$43,710,736.
- Expenses included:
 - FY 11 Level Service Salary \$33,902,249
 - FY 11 Expenses \$14,219,226
 - Total Level Service Budget \$48,121,474.

The committee members discussed the \$400,000 for Out of District Reserves and whether it was inappropriate especially this year with the proposed reductions of classroom teachers. The discussion continued on the collection of assessing an activity fee for all high school students and the difficulty of collecting them. Discussion then turned to the legal costs for Special Education. Mr. Ryder explained how the process works with parent meetings and that the Special Education office uses mediation only about once every two weeks and is often quickly resolved, explaining that it is a small percentage that would go to hearings.

Committee members requested the administration team to put back already reduced services to the students of Arlington instead of using the \$400,000 for Out of District reserves.

Dr. Spangler moved that the School Committee direct the Superintendent and the Administrative Team to eliminate line item 54 - Reserve for New out of District Students of the FY 11 Proposed Budget dated March 23, 2010 for \$400,000 and return to the School Committee on Thursday, March 25, 2010 with a proposal of redistributing that money, seconded by Ms. Heigham.

Voted: 7-0

Ms. Johnson noted that eliminating the reserve of \$400,000 would make the proposed changes from the Proposed Budget Summary document to now be \$644,066 instead of the \$244,066 as of March 23, 2010.

Ms. Johnson said all fees would be looked at in the spring after the budget numbers are voted on and will bring forth equitable athletic fees for each sport.

Ms. Burns moved to have our Chief Financial Officer look at bringing back money into the budget and to have her focus the recommendations to bringing back elementary classroom teachers, cluster teachers at the middle school level and teachers at the high school level as a priority, seconded by Dr. Spangler.

Voted: 7-0

Ms. Johnson suggested eliminating the high school activity fee, and the committee stated they would like to preserve classroom teachers and suggested that the administration decide which reductions to eliminate and bring forward at the meeting Thursday.

Ms. Bodie asked the committee for any other suggestions and stated that she is looking for the School Committee members to vote this budget at our next meeting so she can then bring the budget forward to the Finance Committee on Monday, March 29, 2010.

Ms. Burns questioned if the budget included potential arbitration costs, due to the last arbitration cost of \$500,000. Dr. Bodie said Mr. Coughlin's lawyers made a motion and additional information will be forwarded to the committee on Thursday and that the budget has a contingency reserve for \$200,000. Dr. Bodie said she included back salaries for the two former employees into the budget and the committee should direct Dr. Bodie where this money should sit.

Ms. Heigham requested data for students at risk and for drop out students and asked which specific services we would be cutting that would have supported at risk students and requested recommendations for supporting them.

Mr. Curro moved that the Interim Superintendent is directed to identify \$125,000 in cost savings and efficiencies in the operation of the METCO program for FY 2011 and is directed to take any or all of the following actions toward achieving this goal:

- **Implementation of a moratorium on the acceptance of new students at the elementary, middle school, and high school levels.**
- **Application of class size thresholds – as defined for open enrollment students under File JCA – to elementary –level METCO students; and**
- **Further salary and expense reductions as might be deemed necessary.**

The interim superintendent is further directed to report to the School Committee on a plan for achieving aforementioned cost savings and efficiencies no later than April 27, 2010, seconded by Mr. Thielman and amended to read no later than March 25, 2010.

Roll Call: Ms. Starks Yes, Ms. Heigham Yes, Dr. Spangler Yes, Mr. Thielman Yes, Mr. Curro Yes, Ms. Burns No And Mr. Curran No.

Voted: 5-2

Mr. Curro noted if this motion passed he would like the proposed cut of \$125,000 be restored to the FY 2011 budget for the sixth grade world language.

The committee discussed the concerns of the METCO grant reductions, Title 1 grants services for METCO students and the concerns of which proposed reductions to bring back to restore \$125,000 to the FY 2011 budget.

Dr. Bodie noted the reductions of the \$125,000 from the METCO grant would come from personnel and/or transportation.

Mr. Curro did say he would not motion to restore the sixth grade world language at this time and suggested the administration to come back with a written proposal on Thursday, March 25, 2010 on what to restore from the proposed reductions from METCO.

Mr. Curro called the vote.

When asked by Mr. Curran, the student representatives Ms. Erin McDonald and Ms. Rachel Belofsky expressed their

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Bodie reported that the Search Committee for the Peirce School Principal has selected three finalists Ms. Deborah Butts, Ms. Karen Hartley and Ms. Christine Kelley. Dr. Bodie reported on water storm problems at the schools and on the appreciated the efforts of Mr. Mark Miano, Mr. John Flood and Mr. Paul Jolly and their colleagues who have addressed the situations. Dr. Bodie congratulated the middle school orchestra who had performed at the Massachusetts Music Educators Conference in Boston on March 19th. Dr. Bodie did note the several instances of hate speech at the Ottoson Middle School in the last few weeks. The Human Rights Commission, the Anti-Defamation League and the Police Department have been supporting the administration to help educate students on the harm for all concerned. Dr. Bodie reported that the Kindergarten Teachers and Teacher Aids have completed their on-site observations for accreditation from the national Association of the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). Dr. Bodie also congratulated Ms. Nancy Muise who was named the recipient of the 2010 Mr. Alan McClennen Community Arts Awards and to Ms. Cheryl Christo who is one of ten semi-finalists for 2010-2011 Teacher of the Year Program.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Mr. Curro reported on all correspondence received: Correspondence Rcvd regard Superintendent Finalists, Newsletters – Brackett and Stratton School, MASC legal issues flyer dated March 12, 2010, Stoneman, Chandler and Miller letter regarding public request, Dept of Health and Human Services 2009 2010 Flu Vaccination Report, J. Rice letter regarding Liability Connected to policy decisions about Traffic Supervisors, Draft of Regular School Committee meeting minutes of January 12 & 13, 2010, February 9, 2010, February 23, 2010, and Draft of Special School Committee meeting minutes, March 4, 2010.

CONSENT AGENDA all items listed with an asterisk (*) are considered to be routine and will be enacted by one motion. There will be no separate discussion of these items unless a member of the committee so request, in which event the item will be considered in its normal sequence.

*Approval of Warrant: #10125 dated March 9, 2010 in the amount of \$527, 433.41

*Approval of Exchange Trip to France, April 2011

* Minutes for Approval: none

*Approval of School Committee Organizational Meeting, April 13, 2010 at 7:00 p.m.

Mr. Curro moved to approve the consent agenda as presented, seconded by Mr. Thielman.
Voted: 7-0

POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Mr. Curro moved the following changes of File BDAA Election of School Committee Officers:

2nd READING: File BDAA ELECTION OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE OFFICERS

It is the intent of this policy to encourage all board members to assume leadership roles based on their tenure on the Committee and interest in representing the Committee in a leadership capacity.

Nominations for each officer position – Chair, Vice-Chair, and Secretary -- will be made from the floor at the School Committee organizational meeting, which shall be convened as described in File BDA. Each officer shall be elected by a majority roll-call vote of the members present and voting. If no nominee receives a majority vote for a particular office, the~election~shall be declared null and void, and nominations will be reopened.

Members willing to accept nomination for the office of Chair, Vice-Chair, or Secretary shall declare such willingness approximately one month prior to the Annual Town Election by providing written notice to the Chair and the Administrative Secretary. Senior members who have not held a particular office are strongly encouraged to submit their names as potential nominees.

For the purpose of defining seniority of school committee members under File BDA and File BDAA, the following rule shall apply. When two or more members are elected for the first time at the same election, and when both members have had identical lengths of service on the committee the senior member shall be determined by the member receiving the greater number of votes received in the election in which the members were first elected.

Ideally, the individual assuming the role of Vice-Chair will rotate into the role of Chair. The Committee considers it advisable that members complete at least two years with the Committee before serving as Chair and one year before

becoming Vice-Chair or Secretary.

CROSS REFS.: BDA School Committee Organizational Meeting, Seconded by Mr. Thielman

No discussion

Voted: 5-2

Roll Call, Ms. Starks Yes, Ms. Heigham yes, Dr. Spangler Yes, Mr. Thielman Yes, Mr. Curro Yes, Ms. Burns No, and Mr. Curran No.

Dr. Bodie exited the meeting around 10:10 p.m.

SUPERINTENDENT SEARCH PROCESS SUBCOMMITTEE

The Superintendent Search Process Subcommittee recommends that the School Committee take the following steps at its meeting on March 23, 2010 regarding Superintendent finalists, Mr. Kelly Clenchy and Mr. Eric Ely:

Ms. Heigham moved to ask the members of the School Committee if they wish to consider to take any action relevant to hiring Eric Ely as Superintendent of the Arlington Public Schools, seconded by Ms. Starks.

No discussion

Voted: 7-0

Roll Call: Ms. Starks No, Ms. Heigham No, Dr. Spangler No, Mr. Thielman No, Mr. Curro No, Ms Burns No and Mr. Curran No.

Ms. Heigham moved to ask the members of the School Committee if they wish to consider taking any action relevant to hiring Kelly Clenchy as Superintendent of the Arlington Public Schools, seconded by Ms. Starks.

Voted: 2-5

Roll Call: Ms. Starks No, Ms. Heigham No, Dr. Spangler No, Mr. Thielman No, Mr. Curro No, Ms Burns Yes and Mr. Curran Yes

Ms. Burns recommended Mr. Clenchy as an interim superintendent only Mr. Curran expressed his support for Mr. Clenchy as Superintendent of the Arlington Public Schools. Mr. Curro respected the opinions of his colleagues, but will not support this motion. Ms. Heigham discussed the Superintendent Search Committees process and said that research of each candidate is not done and it the process is private. The majority of the committee forwarded the three finalists names to the full committee without doing full research on each candidate.

Ms. Heigham said that given that a majority does not support taking action to hire Mr. Ely or Mr. Clenchy, the Superintendent Search Process Subcommittee submits the following motion for the School Committee's consideration:

Ms. Heigham moved that the Arlington School Committee request Dr. Kathleen Bodie to reconsider her decision to withdraw from the Superintendent Search. Contingent upon such reconsideration, the School Committee authorizes the Superintendent Search Process Subcommittee to enter negotiations with Dr. Bodie to serve as the Superintendent of the Arlington Public Schools, seconded Mr. Thielman

Ms. Burns will not support this motion and suggests opening the search again and encouraged the administration to apply. Ms. Heigham will support Dr. Bodie and saw much strength in her that the other two finalists did not have. Dr. Spangler will not support the motion and will not oppose it he will abstain. Mr. Curro will support the motion and recommends stability in the Arlington Public Schools. Mr. Thielman will support the motion, appreciates Dr. Bodie leading the Arlington Public Schools, and how well she works with the Finance Committee and other municipals employees. Mr. Curran will not support the motion due to trust issues relating to the audit last year and urged the committee to open up the search again.

Voted: 4-1-1-present

Roll Call: Ms. Starks Yes, Ms. Heigham Yes, Dr. Spangler abstained, Mr. Thielman Yes, Mr. Curro Yes, Ms Burns No, and Mr. Curran present

ROUNDTABLE

Ms. Starks attended events regarding the Crosby and Parmenter Schools and noted that the town would like additional input on the warrant articles. Ms. Heigham said that negotiations are continuing. Mr. Thielman noted the Thompson School Bldg Subcommittee will meet Wednesday, March 24, 2010 at Town Hall. Mr. Curro said he had attended the

Stand for Children event today.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mr. Thielman moved to enter Executive Session at 10:40 p.m. to deliberate strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting might have a detrimental effect. Collective Bargaining may also be conducted, seconded by Dr. Spangler amended by Mr. Thielman to return to open session for adjournment purposes only.

Voted: 6-1

Roll Call: Ms. Starks Yes, Ms. Heigham Yes, Dr. Spangler Yes, Mr. Thielman Yes, Mr. Curro Yes, Mrs. Burns No, Mr. Curran Yes

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Curro moved to adjournment at 10:48 p.m., seconded Dr. Spangler.

Voted: 6-0

*Respectfully submitted by
Karen M. Fitzgerald
Administrative Assistant
Arlington School Committee/cs*